

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 01243 031759Z

50

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 031537Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1874

INFO CINCUSANVEUR LONDON

COMSIXTHFLEET

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

CNO

S E C R E T CAIRO 1243

EXDIS

3.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, EG, UR

SUBJECT: PORT SAID MINESWEEPING BY SOVIET NAVY

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. ACCORDING TO TASS REPORT FROM MOSCOW QUOTED IN AHRAM FEB 1, SOVIET SHIPS WILL SWEEP FOR MINES IN A LARGE AREA NEAR PORT SAID. TASS REPORT APPARENTLY SAID GOE HAD REQUESTED THIS HELP AND THAT USSR WILL PAY FOR IT. MINESWEEPING IS REPORTEDLY SCHEDULED TO BEGIN "THIS YEAR FOLLOWING EGYPTIAN'S AGREEMENT ON PLAN OF OPERATION". END UNCLASSIFIED.

BEGIN SECRET/EXDIS

2. COMMENT: THIS APPEARS TO BE THE MINE CLEARANCE OPERATION THAT THE EGYPTIAN NAVY DISCUSSED WITH US LAST FALL WITH A VIEW TO HAVING CTF-65 DO THE JOB. IN DECEMBER ADMIRAL ZIKRI TOLD US THAT DECISION HAD BEEN MADE TO POTPONE CLEARANCE UNTIL SPRING 1975, BY WHICH TIME THE ME POLITICAL SITUATION MIGHT HAVE EASED, AND THAT HE STILL WANTED US NAVY TO DO THE JOB. HE INISTED HE DID NOT WANT SOVIETS, WHO HAD OFFERED ASSIST, TO BE INVOLVED.

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3. WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION FROM EGYPTIANS RE CORRECTNESS
TASS REPORT. IT COULD EITHER BE A SOVIET EFFORT TO TRY
FORCE THEMSELVES ON EGYPTIANS OR ZIKRI'S AFOREMENTIONED
PREFERENCE COULD HAVE BEEN OVERRULED BY MINWAR GAMASY OR
SOMEONE ELSE. WE ARE DISCREETLY ATTEMPTING CHECK, BUT
WILL WANT TO TAKE CARE AVOID GIVING EGYPTIANS IMPRESSION WE
ARE ACTIVELY COMPETING TO DO THE JOB.

4. WHOEVER DOES IT, WE DOUBT THAT IT WILL BE UNDERTAKEN
UNTIL ME AREA TENSIONS HAVE EASED.
EILTS

SECRET

NNN

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